

Ryomai Kenshin

和月 伸
WATSUMOTO

SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Story & Art by

Nobuhiro Watsuki



volume

14

AH, THE
CURSE OF
THE BUSY
MAN.

ESPECIALLY THE
MAN WHO BUYS
MORE BOOKS AND
ACTION FIGURES
THAN EVER!



IT STARTS
GETTING
MESSY AGAIN
THE SECOND
I CLEAN IT!!

ARRGH!

和月伸宏

NOBUHIRO WATSUKI

CLEAN, ORGANIZE, ARRANGE

IT'S BEEN A YEAR NOW SINCE WE'VE MOVED INTO THE NEW STUDIO. IT'S ROOMY, BUT ALREADY IT'S GETTING CLUTTERED, SO WE INITIATED A SERIOUS CLEAN-UP...WITH RESULTS ILLUSTRATED HERE. HALF THE BOOKS ARE RESEARCH, SO THEY CAN'T JUST GO INTO THE CLOSET. AS FOR THE ACTION FIGURES...WELL, THAT'S BEEN OUT OF CONTROL SINCE I FIRST GOT MY HANDS ON THE "SPAWN" SERIES. WHAT I REALLY NEED? TIME, A HOUSEKEEPER, OR A WIFE....

Rurouni Kenshin, which has found fans not only in Japan but around the world, first made its appearance in 1992, as an original short story in *Weekly Shonen Jump Special*. Later rewritten and published as a regular, continuing *Jump* series in 1994, *Rurouni Kenshin* ended serialization in 1999 but continued in popularity, as evidenced by the 2000 publication of *Yahiko no Sakabatô* ("Yahiko's Reversed-Edge Sword") in *Weekly Shonen Jump*. His most current work, *Busô Renkin* ("Armored Alchemist"), began publication in June 2003, also in *Jump*.



RUROUNI KENSIN
VOL. 14: THE TIME IS NOW
The SHONEN JUMP Graphic Novel Edition

STORY AND ART BY
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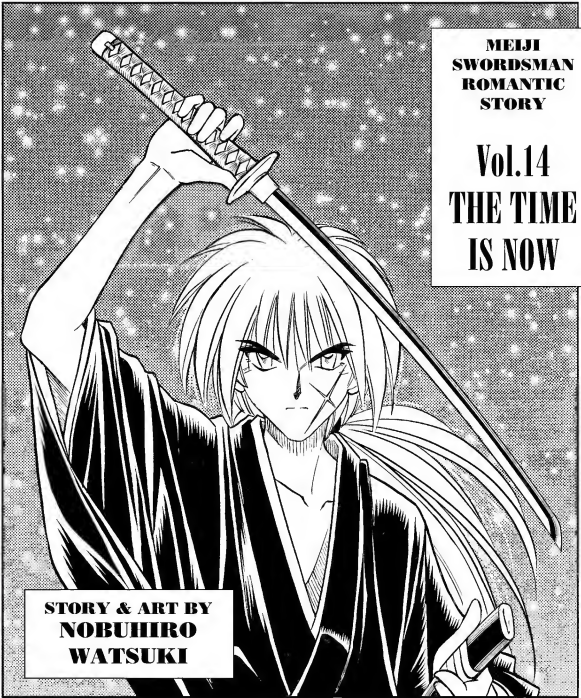


SHONEN JUMP GRAPHIC NOVEL

Rurouni Kenshin™

**MELJI
SWORDSMAN
ROMANTIC
STORY**

**Vol.14
THE TIME
IS NOW**



**STORY & ART BY
NOBUHIRO
WATSUKI**

仲宏



志々雄 真実

駒形由美 (こまがた ゆみ)



THUS FAR

緋村剣心（人斬り抜刀齋）



Himura Kenshin (Hitokiri Battōsai)

神谷 薫



Kamiva Kaoru

相楽左之助



卷町操



魚沼宇水



Uonuma Usui

明神彦 みょうじん やまひこ



Myōjin Yahiko

斎藤 一 (さいとう ひとし)



Saitō Hajime

四乃森蒼紫しのもりあおしき



Shinomori Aoshi

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RURONI KENSHIN



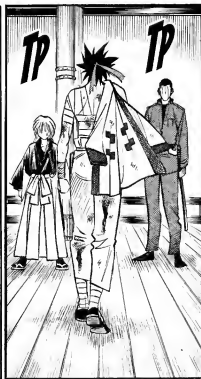
UONUMA USUI

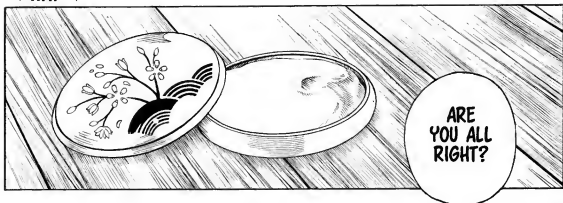
和伸
月宏

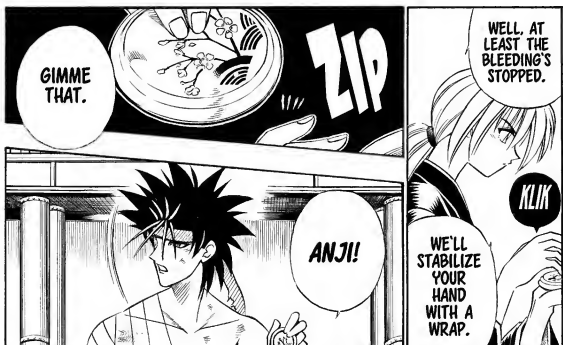


Act 112

**O
n
w
a
r
d**









EVEN
MEGUMI-
DONO'S
MEDICINE
...

...CAN'T
HEAL
THAT
WOUND.









...



IT
STILL MAY
BE...NOT
TOO
LATE.

...YOU
HAD BEST
NOT LET
IT END
HERE.

FOR
THEIR
SAKE...



!

**N
N
N**

HURRY...
AND GO
BACK!

WHAT
?



THE REST
HAVE ALREADY
GONE TO THE
MASSACRE
OF AOI-YA.

THE
JUPPONGATANA
AHEAD ARE
SÔJIRO, USUI,
AND HÔJI.



SHISHIO...



LET'S
GET
BACK
THERE!!

WHAT'S
IT
MATTER
?!

CSH

NOT
SHISHIO-
SAMA'S!

THE
PLAN WAS
ALL HŌJI'S
IDEA...

DON'T
YOU
BLAME
HIM!

TRY AND HEAD
BACK IF YOU MUST...
BUT KNOW THAT YOU
WILL GET LOST, THEY
WILL ALL STILL DIE—
AS WILL YOU.

HEH

IT'S NO
USE. I
ONLY KNOW
THE WAY
TO HERE,
NOT FROM.



KENSIN
...



NK!



GETTING
LOST AND
BACK-
TRACKING,
WE CAN'T
RISK.

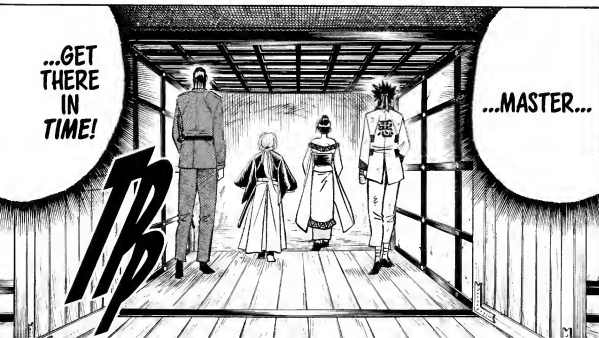


...TRUST,
AND KEEP
MOVING
ONWARD.

WE'VE
NO CHOICE
BUT TO
TRUST IN
THEM...



BUT
PLEASE
...



...GET
THERE
IN
TIME!

...MASTER...





IT'S
TIME FOR
BATTLE!

SO
HIMURA-KUN'S
GUESS WAS
CORRECT.



HEY,
THEY'RE NOT
ALLOWED
TO DIE...NOT
WHILE I'M
OKASHIRA!



THINK LESS
OF BEATING
THEM, AND MORE
OF PROTECTING
YOURSELF!

EVERYONE
GOT
THAT?!

YOU
SHOULD
BE SO
LUCKY,
BOY.

ONE
HUNDRED
AND FIFTY...
THAT'S OVER
20 FOR
EACH ONE
OF US.



THEY
ARE ONLY
WALLS TO
PREVENT
YOUR
FLEEING.

WE
ARE THE
ONES YOU
WILL DEAL
WITH.

GLINT

NOW,
COME
OUT...AND
DIE!





WELCOME.

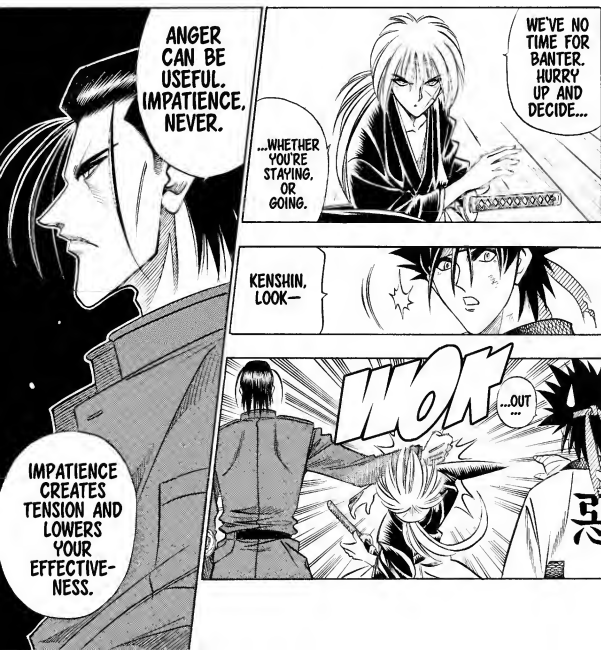




ONE...
TWO...THREE.
ANJI COULDN'T
KILL EVEN
ONE OF
YOU?

HEH
HEH.

WELL,
THAT'S
FINE
WITH
ME...



ANGER
CAN BE
USEFUL.
IMPATIENCE,
NEVER.

...WHETHER
YOU'RE
STAYING,
OR
GOING.

WE'VE NO
TIME FOR
BANTER.
HURRY
UP AND
DECIDE...

KENSHIN,
LOOK—

IMPATIENCE
CREATES
TENSION AND
LOWERS
YOUR
EFFECTIVE-
NESS.

WOK

...OUT
...



I'LL
TAKE CARE
OF THIS
ONE.

YOU
GO ON
AHEAD.

GO.



YOUR
"SHINGAN"
ISN'T AS
SHARP AS
I'VE HEARD.

FUNNY
...

SAITŌ
HAJIME...

IT
SEEMS
YOUR
HEART IS
LESS HARD
THAN I'VE
HEARD.

HEH

...WOULD
ONLY GET
IN THE
WAY...

MY
COMPANION,
WITH HIS
"VOW NOT
TO KILL"...

...OF
MY...

...KILLING
YOU.

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 113

Usui's Shingan, Saitō's Shingan

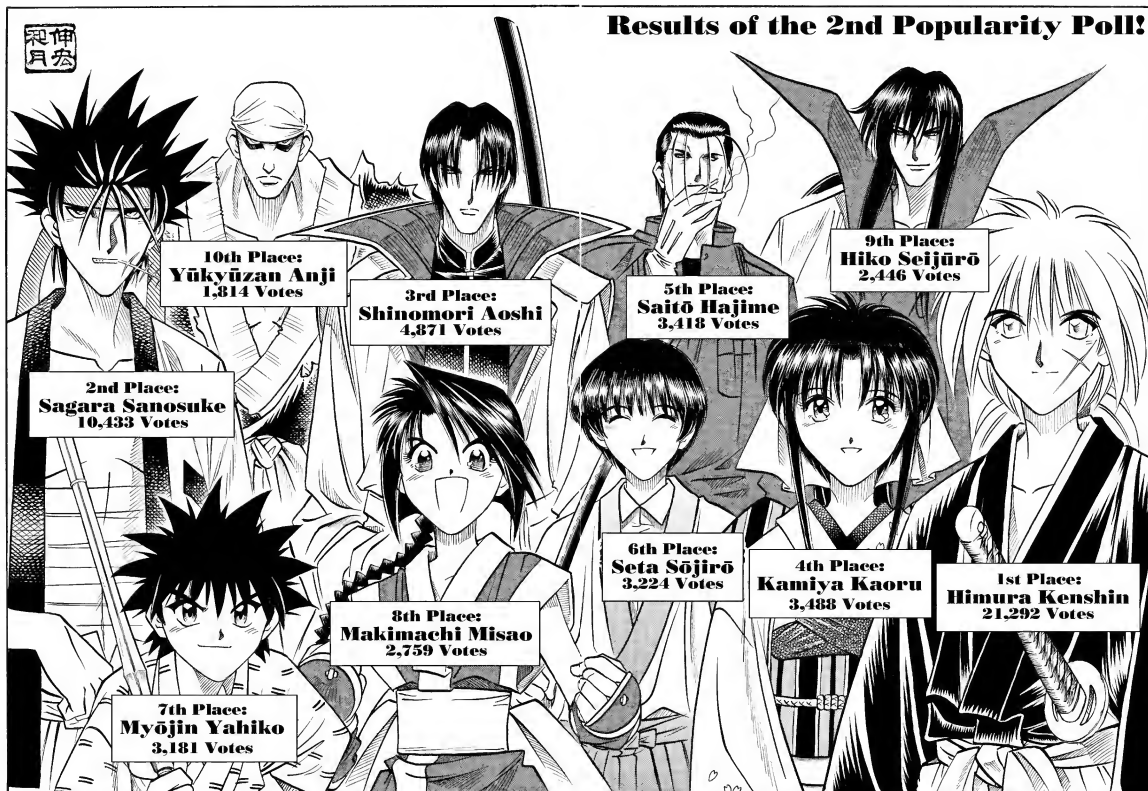


Act 113

Usui's Shingan,

Saitō's Shingan

Results of the 2nd Popularity Poll!



11th: Sagara Sōzō 12th: Shishio Makoto 13th: Okita Sōshi
14th: Takami Megumi 15th: Sanjō Tsubame 16th: Kamatari
17th: Conna Usui 18th: Arai Iori/Udo Jin-e (and so on...)

*These results are based on a poll conducted in the pages of WEEKLY SHONEN JUMP, Japan. Who's your favorite Kenshin character? Send your answers to:

SHONEN JUMP c/o VIZ, LLC

P.O. Box 7710, San Francisco, CA 94117

ATTN: Rurouni Kenshin Popularity Contest







YOU
MAY BE
ABLE TO
READ THE
HEART, BUT
NOT THE
THOUGHTS.



YOUR
"MIND'S EYE"
IS NO
WITCHCRAFT.

MM.
JUST
AS I
THOUGHT.



ONCE WE'VE TAKEN
ON THAT DUTY, WE
ACCEPT THAT DEATH
MUST BE PART OF
IT. TO OBSESS OVER
EVERY LIFE, AS DOES
BATTOSAI, IS FOLLY.

THE POLICE ARE LIKE
THE SHINSENGUMI—
OUR DUTY IS TO
DEFEND JAPAN'S LAWS,
AND THE LIVES
OF ITS PEOPLE.



BUT
REVENGE?
I HOLD
NOT ONE
THOUGHT
OF IT.

IT IS MY DUTY TO
FINISH THIS MATTER
SO THAT THOSE
WHO DIED MAY
PASS SAFELY INTO
THE AFTERLIFE.

WHAT
DRIVES
ME SO
"DEEP" ...?

SS



IF YOUR
"SHINGAN"
WON'T TELL
YOU, I
WILL...





IS
NOTHING
!!

SO. THE
FAMED
GATOTSU
OF SAITŌ
HAJIME...

眼

!

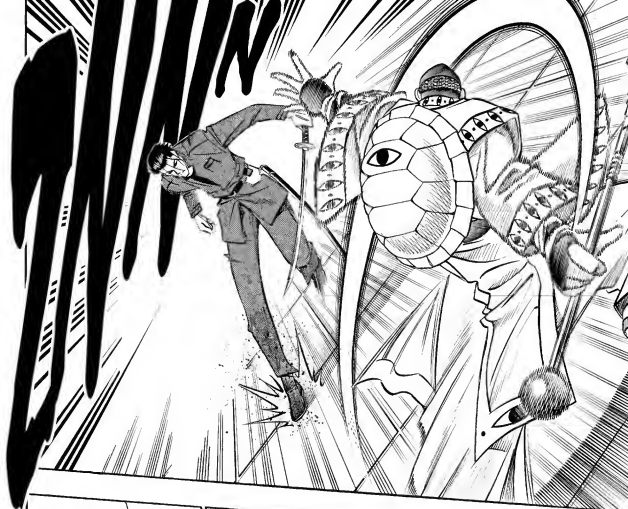
KLEEEEN

HERITAGE
SWORD...

ひゃ
か
り
ょう
らん
百
花
繚
乱

ぼ
う
けん
ぼ
う
ぎ
よく
宝
剣
宝
玉

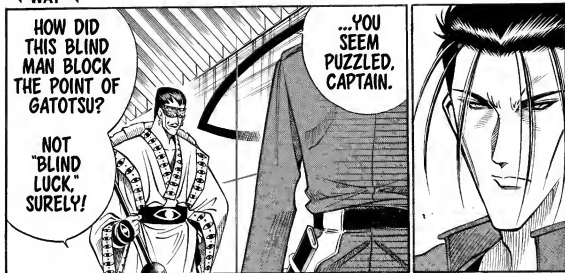
"HYAKKA RYŌRAN"
HUNDRED-FLOWER
SPLENDOR!



HO. ONLY
THREE
WOUNDS.
NOT
BAD.

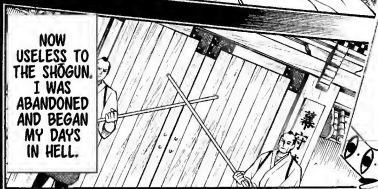
HEH







THAT DAY
DURING THE
BAKUMATSU, I
LOST MY SIGHT
TO SHISHIO.

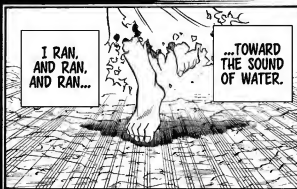


NOW
USELESS TO
THE SHOGUN,
I WAS
ABANDONED
AND BEGAN
MY DAYS
IN HELL.



SO I
RAN...

I WAS ABLE
TO WITHSTAND
THE HUNGER,
BUT NOT
THE THIRST.



I RAN,
AND RAN,
AND RAN...

...TOWARD
THE SOUND
OF WATER.



WITH NO IDEA WHERE I
WAS GOING—STUMBLING
ALONG THE BORDER
BETWEEN LIFE AND
DEATH—I EVENTUALLY
FOUND MYSELF IN
THE MOUNTAINS.





THAT'S WHEN
I REALIZED
THAT
SOMETHING
HAD
AWAKENED.

...AND, BY
THE TIME I
REACHED THE
STREAM, THE
SUN HAD
SET.



**SUPRA-
NORMAL
HEARING.**

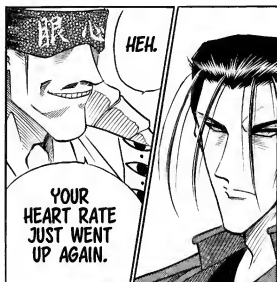
THE ABILITY
TO HEAR THE
SONG OF A
STREAM SO
FAR AWAY.



THE
CONTRACTION
OF MUSCLES
AND FRICTION
OF BONES
DESCRIBE
HIS POSITION.

THE
HEART-
BEAT
TELLS
ME HIS
EMOTIONS.

TO ME,
A MAN
IS BUT A
COLLECTION
OF
SOUNDS.







WANT
THE **REAL**
REASON YOU
JOINED UP
WITH
SHISHIO?



I'LL
TELL
YOU!



HOW YOU LOST
YOUR EYESIGHT—
WHERE WAS THE
RAGE? YOU WERE
SMILING. BUT THEN
I UNDERSTOOD—
YOU'VE LOST ALL
HOPE FOR REVENGE.

YOUR
VERSION
OF
EVENTS
WAS
SELECTIVE.
I'M
AFRAID.

EVEN IF
YOU FOUGHT
HIM, YOU
WOULD
LOSE.

AGAIN,
YOUR LIFE
WOULD BE
MEANINGLESS.



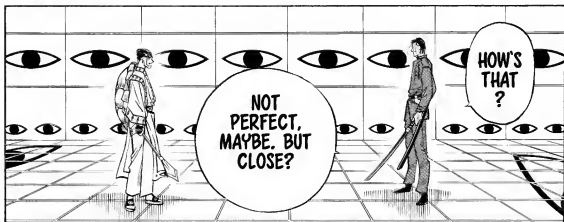
YOU THOUGHT
YOUR "VISION"
MADE YOU MORE
POWERFUL, BUT
WHEN YOU CAME
UP AGAINST
SHISHIO AGAIN,
YOU FOUND HE'D
MADE HIMSELF
MORE POWERFUL
STILL.



YOU
KNEW THAT,
IF YOU SEEMED
TO BE AFTER HIS
LIFE, AT LEAST NO
ONE ELSE
WOULD REALIZE
HOW **BEATEN**
YOU WERE.



SO YOU
DECIDED TO
ACCEPT HIS
OFFER...WITH THE
UNDERSTANDING
THAT YOU'D TRY
TO KILL HIM
ONCE YOU
FOUND THE
CHANCE.



NOT
PERFECT,
MAYBE. BUT
CLOSE?

HOW'S THAT?



...HEH...



НЕН
НЕН НА
НА НА
НА...



HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
HA
!!!



WHAT'RE
YOU
LAUGHING
AT?!



YOUR OWN
"SHINGAN" IS
IMPRESSIVE...

SAITŌ
HAJIME...



A
WHIPPED
DOG WHO
RAN, TAIL
BETWEEN
LEGS...

...BUT
ONE MAN
WITH EXTRA
SENSES IS
QUITE
ENOUGH!

HA!

...OUGHT
NOT SO
LOVE
HIS OWN
BARK.

WHAT
TIME IT
IS NOW, IS
TIME FOR
YOU TO
DIE!

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 114—Fangs That Bite



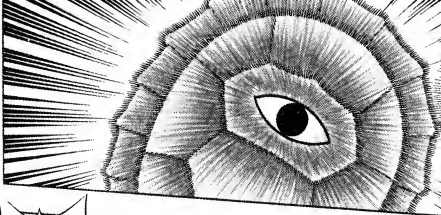
仲宏
和月



Act 114

**Fangs
That
Bite**





A
TORTOISE
SHELL?!



...BUT
THERE'S
NOTHING MY
GATOTSU
CAN'T
PIERCE!!

WHAT
YOU'VE
RIGGED IT
WITH, I'VE
NO IDEA...





"RIGGED"?
WHAT
CAN YOU
MEAN...?

THE
SHIELD IS
CALLED A
"TINBE." THE
ROUNDNESS
IS USED TO
DEFLECT THE
WEAPON...LIKE
SO...



THEN...



...WHILE
BLOCKING
THE LINE OF
SIGHT...



...I
BRING UP
THE SHORT
SPEAR,
"ROCHIN"...





CLUB

...TO
THRUST
!!



BBB

SSSS

ZK

...OF MY
HOMELAND,
RYÜKYÜ.

THE
TINBE AND
ROCHIN ARE
ROYAL
MARTIAL-
ARTS
SECRETS...



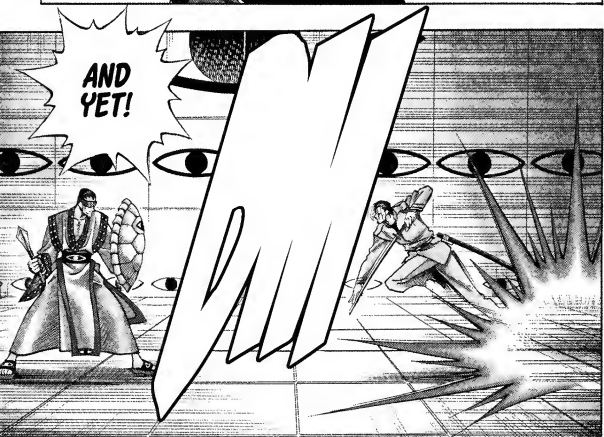


THE
GATOTSU YOU
DEPEND ON IS
THE "FINISHED"
VERSION OF
THE THRUST.



THE WAY OF
SHINSENGUMI IS
TO POLISH ONE'S
BEST MOVE TO
THE REALM OF
PERFECTION.

AND
YET!



...I CAN
NEVER
FAIL AT
THIS
ATTACK!!

SO LONG
AS I CAN
HEAR THE
MOMENT OF
IMPACT...

...ON THE
OUTSIDE
OF THE
TINBE...



THE
VICTOR IS
DECIDED,
SAITÔ.

YOU
CAN NO
LONGER
RELEASE
YOUR
GATOTSU.





YOU SPOKE
OF WHAT
TRULY LIES
IN MY HEART,
OF WHAT EVEN
SHISHIO DOES
NOT KNOW.

THAT, I
WILL MAKE
YOU
REGRET.

BUMP

ARE YOU
PREPARED
?

AND
NOT FOR
QUICK
DEATH,
EITHER.

BUMP

...BY
TORTURING
TO DEATH
THOSE WHO
ARE WEAKER.



AS I THOUGHT.
YOU DISTRACT
YOURSELF FROM
THE SHAME OF
BEING UNABLE
TO DEFEAT
SHISHIO...

HE'S NOT
SUCH A
FOOL.



YOU THINK
SHISHIO DOESN'T
KNOW?

...WHILE
PRETENDING
HE DOESN'T,
IN ORDER
TO USE YOU.



I THINK
HE SEES
RIGHT
THROUGH
YOUR
VANITY...



**SHUT
UP!**

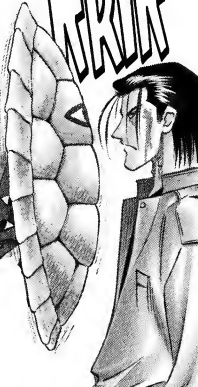
VS

SH...

YOU
CAN'T USE
YOUR
GATOTSU—
AND YOUR
SIGHT'S
IMPEDED—

WHAT
NOW,
THEN?!

KIRIN



WHERE'S
YOUR
MOCKERY
NOW,
SAITŌ?!

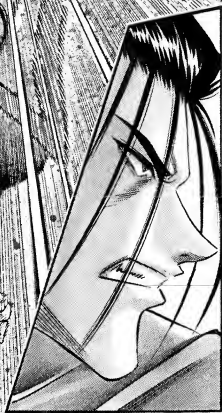
YOU'RE
JUST LIKE
A BLINDED
DARUMA
DOLL!

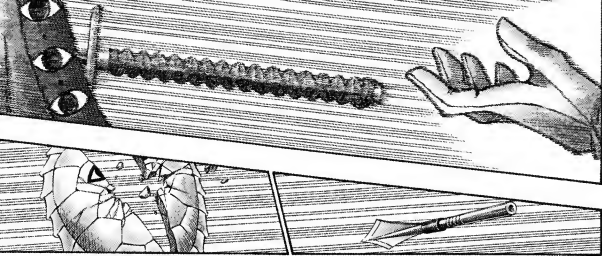
"VISUALIZE"
MY STABBING
YOU IN THE
FACE, FROM
BEHIND THIS
SHIELD!!

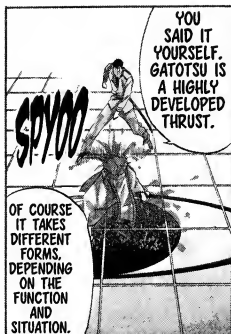
IT'S
TIME FOR
YOU
TO BE
AFRAID!

YOU CAN'T SEE ANY OF
MY MOVEMENTS, BUT I
CAN HEAR EVERY
MOVE THAT YOU—

?!





IT WAS...
SUPPOSED
TO...BE
TO...
SHISHIO.

I WASN'T
SUPPOSED
TO...DIE,
TO YOU...



...



FEH.

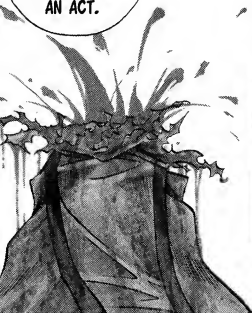
I'D BEEN
SAVING IT
FOR MY
BATTLE
AGAINST
BATTOSAI.

BE
HONORED.



YOUR
MISTAKE WAS
TRYING TO
CHANGE THE
TRUTH BY
PUTTING ON
AN ACT.

WHEN
YOU LOST TO
SHISHIO WITHOUT
A FIGHT, YOU
SHOULD HAVE
ABANDONED
YOUR SWORD.



HOW
PITIFUL.





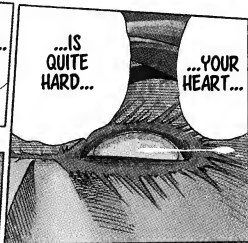
A MAN
WHO FAILS
TO LIVE OR
DIE BY HIS
BELIEFS...

...BARELY
EVEN
WARRANTS
PITY.



DON'T
TELL ME
YOU WERE
EXPECTING
COMFORT...?

SORRY...



...IS
QUITE
HARD...

...YOUR
HEART...



OF...
COURSE
NOT...

HEH...

GLINT



**WITHOUT
DOUBT...**

**IN THIS
MODERN AGE...
SAITÔ...HOW
LONG WILL
YOU LIVE BY
YOUR SWORD?**

**TO
STAY ON
ONE'S PATH...
WITHOUT THE...
SLIGHTEST
DEVIATION...**

**...UNTIL
I DIE.**

**HOW
LONG, BY
YOUR...
"SWIFT
DEATH
TO EVIL"
...?**

**SO
SIMPLE...
YET...SO
DIFFICULT.**



BESIDES, QUIT WHINING—
WE'RE ALMOST THERE!
NEXT IS THE STRONGEST
OF THE JUPPONGATANA—
SETA! THAT'S ONE BOY
WHO WON'T BE SO EASY!



WHO
ARE YOU
CALLING
HEAVY?!

**G
R
R**



BLAST IT,
WHERE'S
THE NEXT
HALL?! THIS
WOMAN'S
HEAVY!!



SETA
SŌJIRO...



...HE'S
HERE!!



THAT'S
HŌJI'S
ROOM...AND
IT'S
EMPTY!

DON'T
BE SO
HASTY.

THAT'S
NOT IT.

KENSHIN!
HEY!!

LET'S
KEEP
GOING,
KENSHIN!

The Secret Life of Characters (35) —Uonuma Usui—

Origin-wise, he grew out of a chat with the assistants. (Several of the Juppongatana, actually, came from an assistant saying, "How about this?" Then Watsuki would go and work out the idea.) In the case of Usui, one assistant had been pushing hard for a "blind swordsman." I wasn't too thrilled with the idea originally, but then when we started talking about "Shingan"—the ability to read people's emotions by listening to their heart-beat and pulse—I decided to go with the flow.

Usui was at first supposed to fight Kenshin right after Chō—chasing him down in the city like the Terminator—but the plot started going in a different direction, and Usui ended up fighting (and dying) against Saitō. To be honest, he's a character (like Raijūta) that I regret having created. Usui is more popular than Raijūta was, though, so I'm guessing that must also mean he's stronger. (The Terminator-like Usui that I didn't end up drawing is slated to appear after the Kyoto Arc, so be watching for him.)

Though many people seem to think the model in terms of design is "Lau" from "Virtua Fighter," it's actually "Tao Pai Pai" from Toriyama-sensei's "Dragon Ball." (As the first villain in that story to defeat Gokū, he made a strong impression!) As for the eyeball-covered costume, I had envisioned a plain, tribal outfit, but when I saw the spider-like angel from "Evangelion," out that first idea went. (Up till about Episode 20, I was all but obsessed with "Eva"; more about that in this space as time goes on.) Since we're already on the subject, Usui was also supposed to have been a handsome, long-haired type, but when I did the rough sketch, he looked so much like "Ukyō" from "Samurai" that I thought, "Uh-oh, busted again—better not." That's when I went back to the drawing board, and the current Usui was born. Although his overall look was pulled together from several different sources, I think it came out pretty well. If I could have created a character this successful from scratch, well, I'd have no complaints, but....



Act 115—The Time Is Now





SHE
SAYS IT'S
EMPTY—

KENSHIN!
HEY!!



NO...



!

THERE'S
DEFINITELY
A PRESENCE
IN THERE...



...IS THE
OKASHIRA
OF THE
ONIWABANSHŪ
ONMITSU-
SHINOMORI
AOSHI!!

THE
ONLY
ONE IT
CAN
BE...



SO,
KENSHIN...
WHAT
NEXT?

...

HHH



COME
OUT, COME
OUT,
WHEREVER
YOU
ARE...!

THE
JUPPON-
GATANA
HAVE
COME TO
PLAY!!



...AND
WRAP THEM
UP FOR
SHISHIO-
SAMA!

WE'LL
CHOP OFF
YOUR
HEADS...



WHAT
SHALL
WE
DO?

WHO'D'VE
THUNK
IT?

...THAT'S
THE
JUPPON-
GATANA?!

HMM
...

WHILE
WE STAND
HERE TALKING,
AOI-YA'S IN
DANGER!

WE
JUST DON'T
HAVE THE
TIME TO
WASTE...!



OF COURSE,
IT'S NOT
AS THOUGH
THEY'RE
JUST ANY
THREE...

AS
KAORU
SAYS,
THINK
DEFENSE,
NOT
OFFENSE.



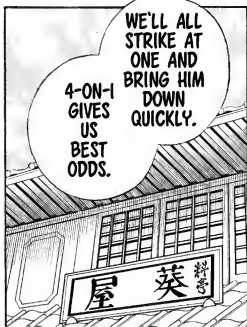
LET'S
TAKE 'EM
UP ON
IT!

7-ON-3
BEATS
7-ON-150.



...IF WE
CAN JUST
MANAGE TO
STALL LONG
ENOUGH!

A CROWD
LIKE THAT'S
BOUND TO
ATTRACT THE
POLICE...



4-ON-1
GIVES
US
BEST
ODDS.

WE'LL ALL
STRIKE AT
ONE AND
BRING HIM
DOWN
QUICKLY.



THREE
ON THE
BEST, TWO
ON THE
OTHERS?

HOW
SHALL WE
SPLIT UP,
THEN?



NO...



MISAO—YOU
TAKE THE ONE
WITH THE
SCYTHE...BUT
DON'T TRY
TO FINISH ON
YOUR OWN.

KAORU
AND YAHIKO—
KEEP THAT
BLACK
MASK
OCCUPIED!

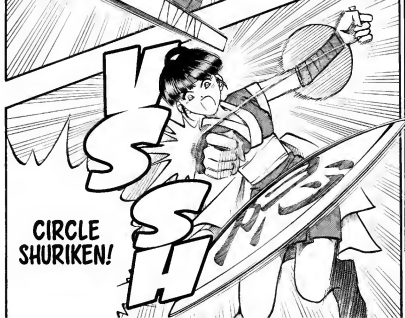


AS FOR YOU
FOUR—TAKE ON
OUR SLOW-LOOKING
FRIEND! BRING
HIM DOWN FAST...

I'LL GIVE THE
ORDERS FROM
HERE...WHILE
KEEPING YOU
ALL ALIVE!

...THEN SPLIT
INTO TWO
GROUPS, AND
HELP THE
OTHERS.

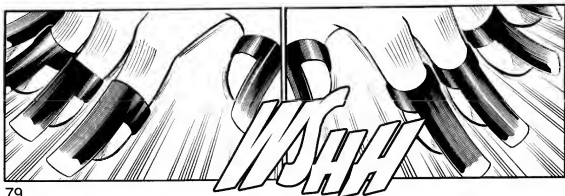




FIRST
BLOOD!











I
WOULDN'T
WORRY
ABOUT
THEM...

NO—!!



THE
ONE I'D
WORRY
ABOUT IS
YOU.





...TO
BRING
AOSHI
HOME.

"SHE'S IS
CUTER
THAN ME!
HOW
UNFAIR'S
THAT?!"

TO
MISAO-
DONO.



AND
ALSO...

...TO
AOSHI...

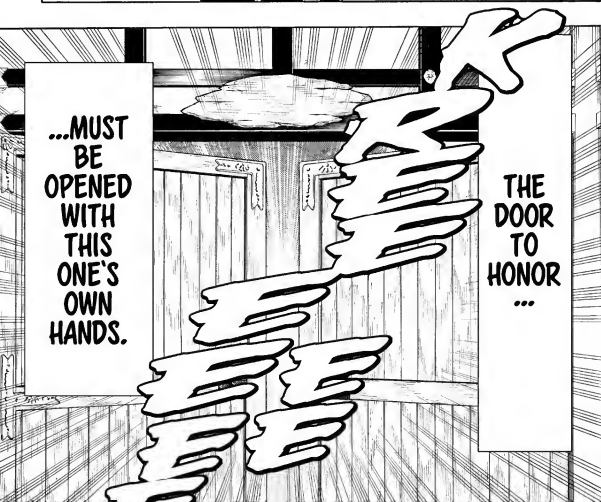
A
BATTLE
WAS
PROMISED.

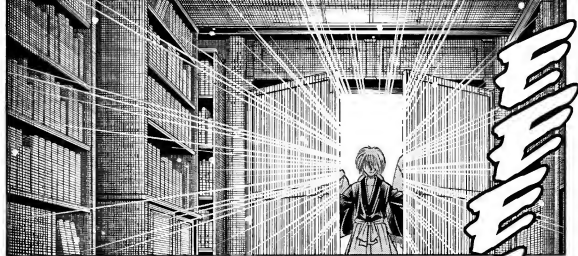


A
PROMISE
WAS
MADE...



KENSHIN...





IS
NOW
THE TIME,
THEN...

...HIMURA
BATTOSAI
?



Rurouni Kenshin





SHINOMORI
AOSHI

RUROUNI
KENSIN

四乃森 蒼紫

るろうに剣心

Act 116
To
Battle,
Again



AOSHI...



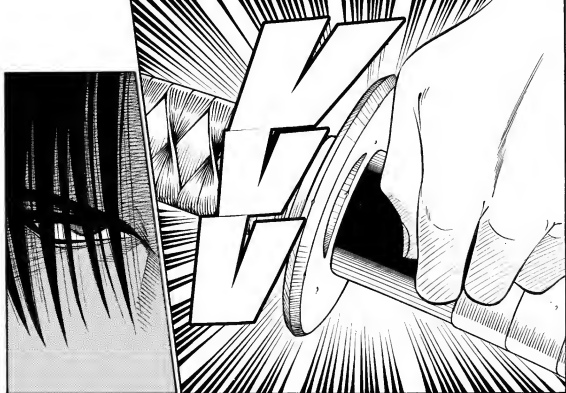
...I WILL
CHANGE
INTO
ANYTHING.

...AND
BECOME
THE ONE,
TRUE,
HITOKIRI...

DUAL
"NITŌ-RYŪ"
KODACHI!

!

DRAW,
BATTŌSAI.



GIVE IT UP,
KENSIN...

IF HE
WERE
THE TYPE
TO SEE
SENSE, THIS
MIGHT'VE
ENDED AT
KANRYU'S
MANSION.

...WHAT
CAN
YOU
MEAN?!

...TO
THE
OKASHIRA
OF THE
ONI-
WABANSHU
ONMITSU.

THE
PROMISE
WILL BE
KEPT...

...BOTH
TO YOU,
AND TO ONE
OTHER...

HE'LL NEVER
CHANGE THAT
MUCH. YOU'RE
GONNA HAVE
TO BEAT HIM.

TO
ONE
NOT
YOURSELF.







ARE WE
THROUGH,
NOW?

IS
THAT
ALL...?

HE'S
COMING,
KENSHIN...
DRAW YOUR
SWORD!



HEY!
DON'T
TELL ME
YOU WERE
SERIOUS?!

TP

NO.



...AND THUS
MADE TO SEE
THAT THIS ONE
CANNOT BE
DEFEATED.

THIS
NEW AOSHI
WILL BE
STOPPED BY
THE ART
OF THE
TERRAIN...



...OF
BRINGING
BACK THE
AOSHI WHO
ONCE WAS.

IT MAY
BE THE
ONE
HOPE...



WHAT
THE HELL!
DO WHAT
YOU GOTTA
DO!!

THEN AGAIN,
"PAIN IN THE
NECK" IS YOUR
MIDDLE
NAME.

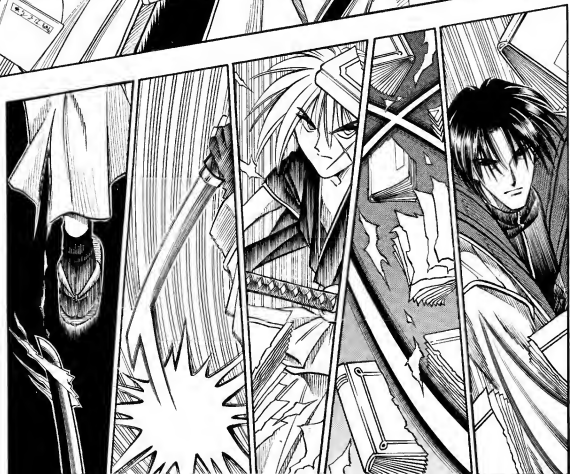
LOOK, WE
HAVEN'T GOT
TIME FOR THIS
PAIN-IN-THE-
NECK WAY
TO...

SORRY.

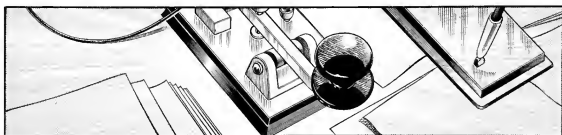
HEH













WITH THOSE
OTHERS
INJURED,
BATTŌSAI...

SUCH
CONFI-
DENCE.

...WILL BE
EASILY DEALT
WITH BY
SŌJIRO AND
MYSELF.

ALMOST
NO ONE CAN
FIGHT ANJI
WITHOUT
BEING HURT.

AND USUI IS
SURE TO GIVE
SAITŌ A WOUND
OR TWO, EVEN
THOUGH HE'S
SURE IN THE
END TO LOSE.

NOT
SO
VERY
BAD.



...SEE ME
FLUSTERED,
AND IN
PANIC?

YOU'D
RATHER...



...THE TIME
HAS COME FOR
BATTŌSAI AND
AOSHI TO
SETTLE THEIR
SCORE.

IN
ANY
CASE...



WHAT?

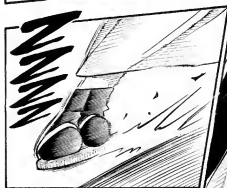
READY
YOUR
SWORD—
THOUGH YOU'VE
PLENTY OF
TIME.

SŌ.



HMPH

THEIR
BATTLE IS
BOUND TO
DRAG ON
FOR QUITE
AWHILE.



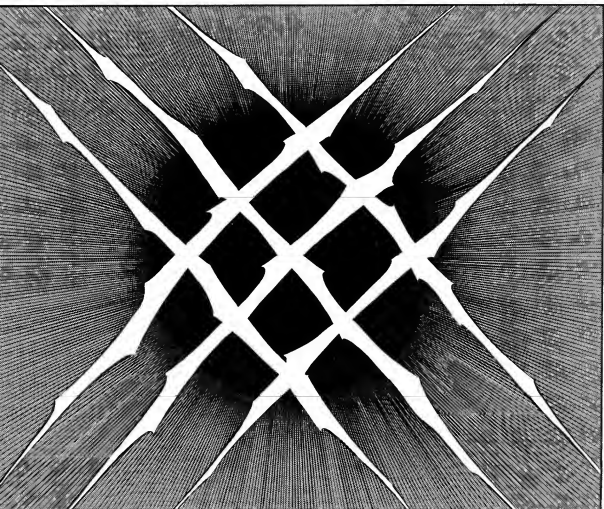
AS YOU
ARE NOW,
EVEN IF THIS
ONE NEVER
DRAWS,
YOUR HOPE
OF VICTORY
IS...

AOSHI!

ZOO

CRASH!!!

!!!



WHEELING-SWORD
"KAITEN-KENBU"
DANCE

DUAL-STYLE
"NITO-RYU"
KODACHI

回

天

剣

舞

ふ

かい

てん

けん

ふ

小太刀

二刀流

こ

だ

ち

に

とう

りゅう

ろく れん
六連

SIX SUCCESSIVE
"ROKUREN" STRIKES





WHY
IS
THAT?

...**"DRAG
ON"**?



WHEN
THOSE TWO
CROSS SWORDS,
IT WILL BY
NECESSITY HAVE
TO BE A LONG,
DEADLY CHISELING
AWAY AT EACH
OTHER'S LIVES.

IT'S
OBVIOUS.

BATTŌSAI
AND AOSHI'S
SKILLS ARE
NEARLY
EQUAL.

Rurouni Kenshin





Act 117—Aoshi Attacks

















ONMYŌ-
HASSHI!

陰陽

おん

みよう

撥止

はっ

し

KODACHI
NITŌ-RYŪ...



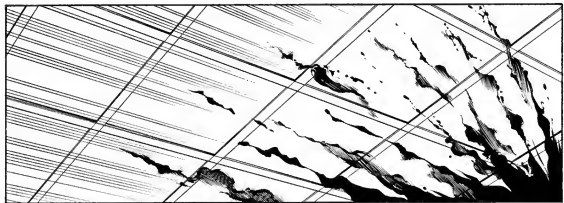
A FLYING
STRIKE
LIKE THE
HIRYÜSEN...?



HIDDEN
BEHIND
THE FIRST
SWORD...

...A
SECOND
BLADE,
TRAVELING
THE EXACT
SAME
PATH?!







JUST AS
YOU SAID
TO ME
BEFORE...

GET UP,
BATTŌSAI.

...DEFEATING
YOU AS
YOU ARE
NOW WOULD
BE
NOTHING.

THE
MAN I
KNOW
WOULDN'T
FALL TO
SOMETHING
LIKE THIS.



ONCE
YOU ARE
DEFEATED,
FOR THE SAKE
OF THOSE FOUR
WHO LIVED AND
DIED FOR
BATTLE...

THE ONE
I MUST DEFEAT
IS HE WHO
WAS CALLED THE
ULTIMATE WARRIOR
OF THE
BAKUMATSU...

...THE
WORLD WILL
KNOW THAT
IT IS WE
WHO ARE
STRONGEST!

...YOU, THE
HITOKIRI
BATTŌSAI!

PRIDE AND
COMPASSION.
GOOD AND
EVIL...

FOR IT
IS *THAT* FOR
WHICH I
SACRIFICED
IT ALL...



...WITH
WHOM I
TROD THE
SAME
PATH.

...AS WELL
AS THOSE
WHO
TRUSTED
ME...



...WHILE
I HOLD IN
HAND THE
BLOSSOM OF
GLORY.

STAND,
BATTOSAI!
FOR YOU
FACE YOUR
DEFEAT...



...WILL
BE AT ITS
END.

AND,
WITH IT, MY
LIFE AS THE
LAST "OKASHIRA"
OF THE
BAKUMATSU...





REVERSE
YOUR SAKABATŌ,
AND ANSWER
MY SWORD
AT FULL
STRENGTH.

NOW,
BATTŌSAI!



MAYBE HE
DID HOLD
BACK, THAT
TIME WITH
THE OLD MAN
AT AOI-YA...
BUT NOT
ANYMORE.

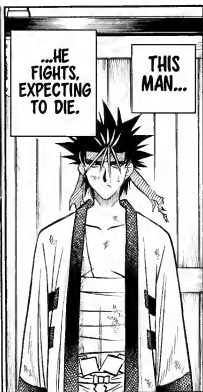
LIVES TO
FIGHT...
LIVES TO
DIE. HIS
HUMANITY,
CAST AWAY.

ALREADY
HE'S
GIVEN UP
ON LIFE.

HE
REALLY HAS
THROWN IT
ALL AWAY.
FOR THIS.

...HE
FIGHTS,
EXPECTING
TO DIE.

THIS
MAN...



NOW,
IT'S KILL
OR BE KILLED!
IF YOU DON'T
KILL HIM,
YOU'LL DIE!

THIS IS BAD,
KENSIN.
YOU CAN'T
BE THINKING
OF
"PROMISES"
NOW...!





YOU COME
INTO THIS
BATTLE
THINKING
THOUGHTS
LIKE
THAT...?

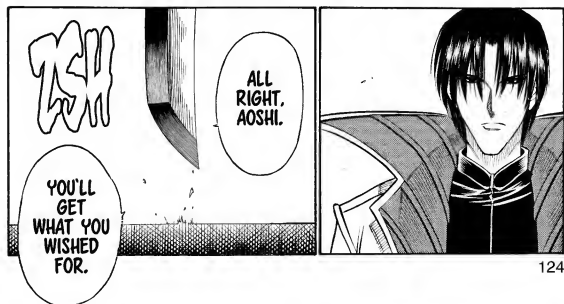
"END IT ALL
WITH THE
BLOSSOM OF
GLORY IN
HAND"...?



NOT ONE
OF THEM
WANTS THIS
TO END
IN YOUR
DEATH!!

YOU'RE
A
FOOL!

MISAO-DONO,
OKINA-DONO,
HAN'NYA,
SHIKIJŌ,
BESHIMI,
HYOTTOKO...

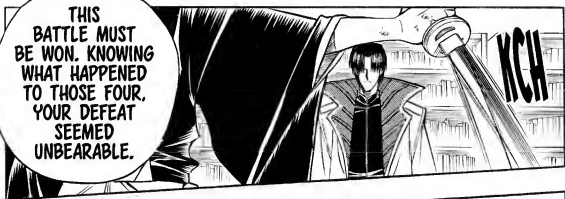


TKH

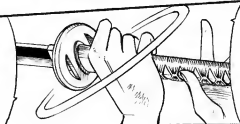
ALL
RIGHT,
AOSHI.

YOU'LL
GET
WHAT YOU
WISHED
FOR.

THIS
BATTLE MUST
BE WON. KNOWING
WHAT HAPPENED
TO THOSE FOUR,
YOUR DEFEAT
SEEMED
UNBEARABLE.



YOU'VE
MADE YOUR
OWN DEFEAT
INEVITABLE.

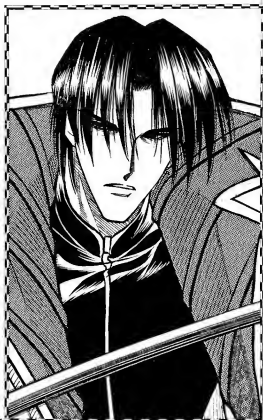


BUT
OBVIOUSLY
YOUR HEART
CANNOT BE
TURNED.

BUT KNOW
THIS! IF IT IS
TO BE DONE, IT
WILL BE DONE
AS THIS ONE'S
SELF—AS
HIMURA
KENSIN!!



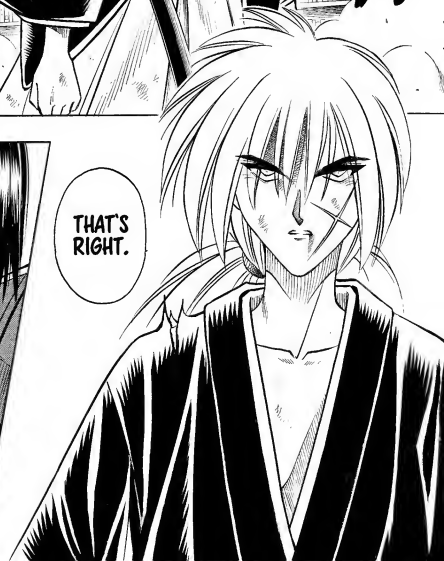
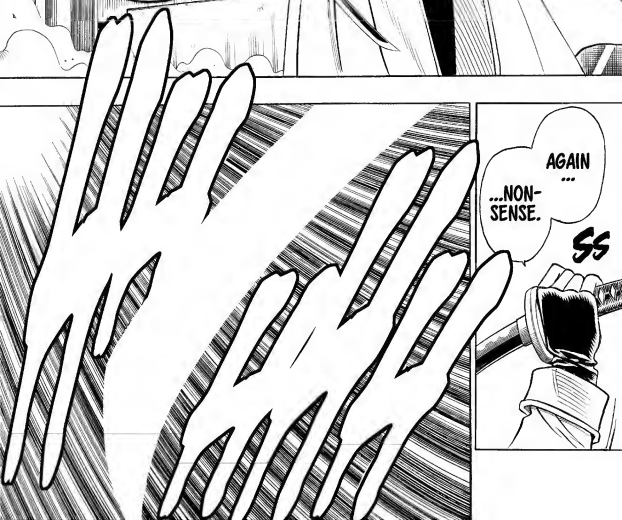
Rurouni Kenshin



Act 118 Paper- Thin



仲宏
和月





...WHILE
BEING
CAREFUL
OF A FOE'S
LIFE?!

HOW
CAN YOU
FIGHT
AT FULL-
STRENGTH...



IN THE
CHAOS OF
THE BAKUMATSU,
YOU ALWAYS
FOUGHT TO
KILL.

THAT IS
WHY YOU
STAND
BEFORE
ME AS THE
ULTIMATE
HITOKIRI!

A SWORDFIGHT IS ALWAYS
A FIGHT FOR ONE'S LIFE!
AND THE BATTLE WE FIGHT NOW
IS THE FIGHT OF ALL FIGHTS!

UNTIL
ONE LIVES—
AND THE OTHER
DIES—THERE
CAN BE NO
END!



NO MORE
EMPTY WORDS!
SET YOURSELF
TO KILL ME!

I'VE TRAINED
IN THE SHADOWS
BETWEEN LIFE
AND DEATH.
I'VE GIVEN
EVERYTHING FOR
THIS BATTLE!



THIS
ONE HAS
ALSO TRAINED
BETWEEN
LIFE AND
DEATH.



VP

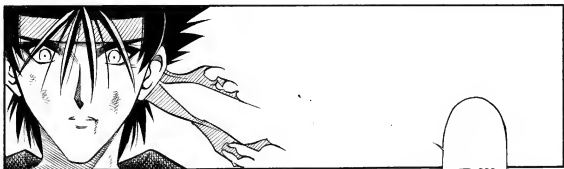
...TO
DRAW FULL
POWER,
WITHOUT
BECOMING
THE
HITOKIRI
BATTOSAI.

ALSO,
A WAY
WAS
LEARNED...

IT WAS ONLY
FOR A WEEK.
BUT THE SECRET
OF HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ
WAS HAD...

...AFTER
RETURNING
TO MASTER
HIKO
SEIJURŌ.

!



AGAIN,
EMPTY
WORDS.



COME
FIGHT,
AND
SEE.

ARE
THEY?
IF SO...



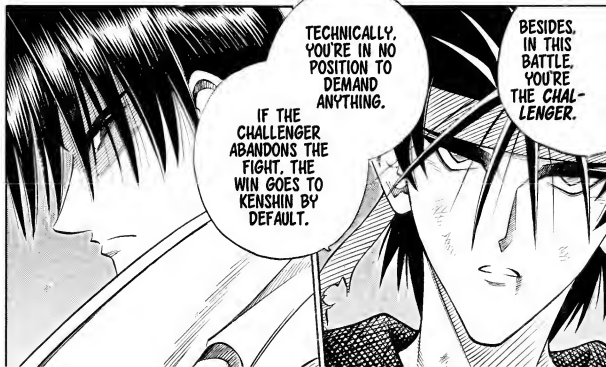
IT'S
OBVIOUS
TALKING'S
NOT GONNA
DO IT
FOR YOU.

WE GOT
HEADS TO
CRACK, AND
NO TIME
TO CRACK
'EM IN.

GO ON,
SHINOMORI-
SAN... YOU
KNOW YOU
WANT TO.

WE LET THE
FIGHTING
DO THE
TALKING.

HOW DO GUYS
LIKE US KNOW
WHO'S WEAK,
AND WHO'S
STRONG...?



TECHNICALLY,
YOU'RE IN NO
POSITION TO
DEMAND
ANYTHING.

IF THE
CHALLENGER
ABANDONS THE
FIGHT, THE
WIN GOES TO
KENSIN BY
DEFAULT.

BESIDES,
IN THIS
BATTLE,
YOU'RE
THE CHAL-
LENGER.

WHY IS IT I
HAVE YET TO
HEAR ABOUT
THIS "SECRET"?

BY
THE
WAY,
KENSHIN
...

SORRY.

SO MUCH
ELSE TO
REMEMBER...

...BUT AT
LEAST I'LL
SEE THE
POWERED-UP,
NON-BATTOSAI
KENSHIN
FIRST.

AH, WELL.
I FEEL BAD
FOR YAHIKO
AND THE
GIRL...

BATTOSAI.

YOU
WILL.



IT'S
TIME.

KODACHI
NITŌ-RYŪ...

ONIWABAN-
STYLE...

...JŪJI
(X-SLASH)!

GOKŌ
(CURVED-
BLADE)...

字

鉤



HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ...



RYŪSHŌSEN
(DRAGON
FLIGHT)!!!

りゅう
しょう
せん
龍翔閃
!!!



NGH!



RR
RR

RR
RR







DO
YOU STILL
THINK
THEM
"EMPTY
WORDS"?



ONE WIDTH
OF PAPER
CLOSER, AND
I'D HAVE
SLICED YOUR
JUGULAR.

...IT'S
STILL TOO
EARLY TO
GLOAT.



...IS THE
GULF
BETWEEN
US.

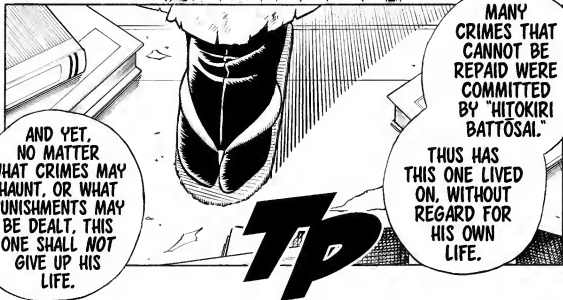
BUT THE
WIDTH
OF THAT
PAPER...



"SOMETIMES,
THE
BRAVEST
ACT IS
TO
LIVE."
THAT
IS WHAT
THIS ONE'S
MASTER
TAUGHT
IN
COMBAT.

...A
STRENGTH
FAR BEYOND
THE
WILLINGNESS
TO DIE WAS
FOUND.

WHILE
TRAINING IN
THE SHADOWS
BETWEEN
LIFE AND
DEATH...



AND YET,
NO MATTER
WHAT CRIMES MAY
HAUNT, OR WHAT
PUNISHMENTS MAY
BE DEALT, THIS
ONE SHALL NOT
GIVE UP HIS
LIFE.

MANY
CRIMES THAT
CANNOT BE
REPAID WERE
COMMITTED
BY "HITOKIRI
BATTŌSAI."

THUS HAS
THIS ONE LIVED
ON, WITHOUT
REGARD FOR
HIS OWN
LIFE.

TP



BUT
ANYONE CAN
THROW AWAY
THINGS THAT
AREN'T WANTED—
NOTHING TO
IT.

AOSHI.

YOU
SAY YOU'VE
THROWN
EVERYTHING
AWAY.



BUT
WHEN IT
COMES TO
"HEART," YOU
BARELY CAST
A SHADOW.

YOUR
SWORDS
HAVE
BECOME
STRONGEST
OF ALL.



THIS NEED
OF YOURS, AS
OKASHIRA, TO
OFFER THEM
GLORY...
THIS ONE
GETS THAT.

HAN'NYA.
SHIKIJO.
BESIMI.
HYOTTOKO.

YOUR
FOUR MOST
TRUSTED
MEN,
DEAD.

WHAT
ARE
YOU
...?



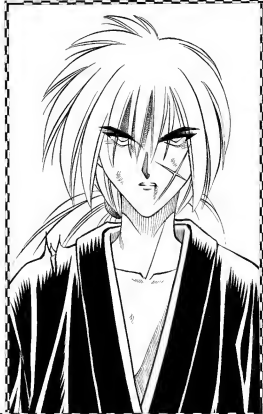
WHAT YOU
DO ISN'T
FOR THEM
ANYMORE,
BUT AGAINST
THEM!

BUT TO SPEAK
IT WHEN ONE'S
SOUL IS AS WEAK
AS YOURS IS
NOW...

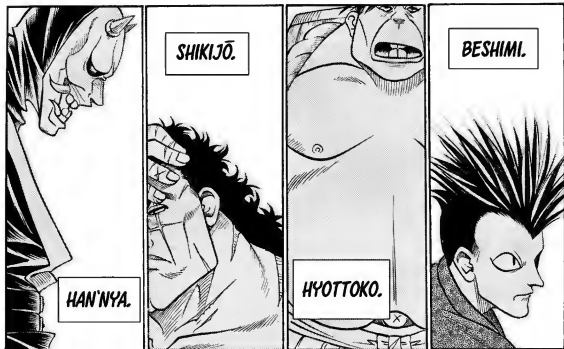
YOU'RE
USING THEM
AS SOME
SELFISH EXCUSE
TO KILL!!

THAT DESIRE
THEN BECOMES
MERE EXCUSE
TO TURN
AWAY FROM
LIFE!

Rurouni Kenshin



Act 119—Time to Wake Up



OR IS
IT THAT
THEY JUST
MAKE IT
EASIER?!

THE
TRUTH NOW,
AOSHI! IS IT
FOR THEM
THAT YOU
FIGHT...



Act 119

Time to Wake Up

仲宏
和月





HOW
DARE
YOU!



IS THAT
BECAUSE
IT CUTS
TOO
CLOSE?

THE
QUESTION
MAKES
YOU
ANGRY.





WHAT
DO YOU
KNOW?!



THINK,
AOSHI.



TO OFFER
THOSE WHO'VE
DIED THEIR
SO-CALLED
"GLORY," YOU
LOCK YOUR-
SELF AWAY...

BUT
FROM
WHAT
DO YOU
RUN?





THIS
ONE GETS
THAT, AS
WELL.

NG

IS IT THAT,
IF YOU **DON'T**
LOCK YOURSELF
AWAY, YOU'LL
FEEL THE WEIGHT
OF THEIR
DEATHS?



BUT
WHATEVER
YOU DO
IN THIS
HEARTLESS
STATE...

...WILL
DO THEIR
SOULS NO
GOOD.



...SCOLD HIM
WITH TRUTH
THAT DIGS
OUT HIS
HEART FROM
THE INSIDE...!

THE PAIN
OF HAVING
A MAN
STRONGER
THAN HIM..



...TO A
MAN HE
SEES NOT
AS AN
ENEMY.
BUT AS
A PEER.

BUT IT
PAINS HIM,
TOO,
HAVING
TO SAY
THAT
TRUTH...



...IT'S
WORKING.









AFTER
YOUR BATTLE
WITH OKINA,
IN ORDER TO
PROTECT
KYOTO AND
THE ONI-
WABANSHŪ...
...SHE
TOOK
ON THE
BURDEN OF
LEADERSHIP,
IN YOUR
STEAD.

...THAT
MISAO-DONO
HAS DECLARED
HERSELF
OKASHIRA
OF THE ONI-
WABANSHŪ?

AOSHI,
DID
YOU
KNOW...



I'M NOT
HAPPY SHE'S
INVOLVED WITH
THE ONIWABANSHŪ,
BUT I KNOW
SHE'LL DO
WELL.

MISAO
IS...

...A
STRONG
GIRL.



...THAT
THIS "STRONG
GIRL" SHED
TEARS WHEN
YOU WERE
PROMISED TO
BE BROUGHT
BACK?

THEN
DID
YOU
KNOW...

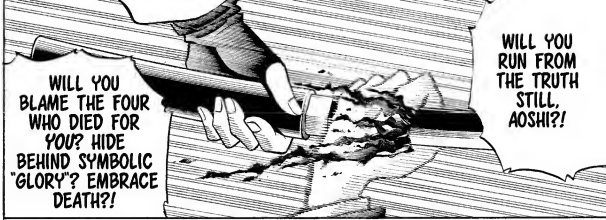
ONLY
ONE PERSON
CAN SOOTHE
THOSE
TEARS.

HOW
HARD MUST
IT BE FOR HER
TO STEEL
HERSELF, IN THE
FACE OF HER
WORLD'S CRUEL
REALITY...?

HOWEVER
STRONG SHE
MAY BE, SHE'S
STILL ONLY
SIXTEEN.

ONLY
YOU,
AOSHI.





WILL YOU
BLAME THE FOUR
WHO DIED FOR
YOU? HIDE
BEHIND SYMBOLIC
"GLORY"? EMBRACE
DEATH?!

WILL YOU
RUN FROM
THE TRUTH
STILL,
AOSHI?!

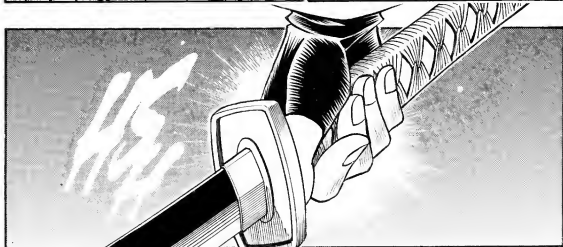


IT'S TIME
TO RESTART
THE LIFE THAT
STOPPED
AT KANRYU
MANSION!!

FIND YOUR
SOUL AGAIN,
AOSHI! CALL
BACK THE
COURAGE
YOU'VE
LOST!!



IT'S
TIME TO
WAKE
UP!!





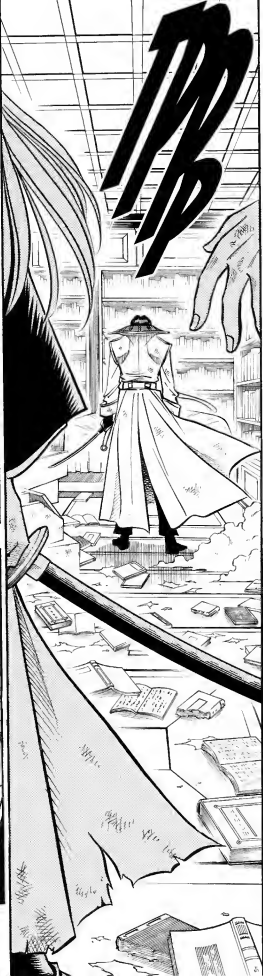
AH!

TM



NGH!





AND
WHEN DID
THIS ONE
SAY...



...EVEN IF
WHAT YOU
SAY IS TRUE,
HOW CAN I
MOVE ON...

...UNLESS
WE FINISH
THIS
BATTLE?



...HE
OBJECTED
TO
FINISHING?





HIS
EYES,
THEY'RE
DIFFERENT.

WATCH
IT,
KENSHIN...



...THE EYES
FROM LONG
BEFORE KANRYŪ
MANSION.

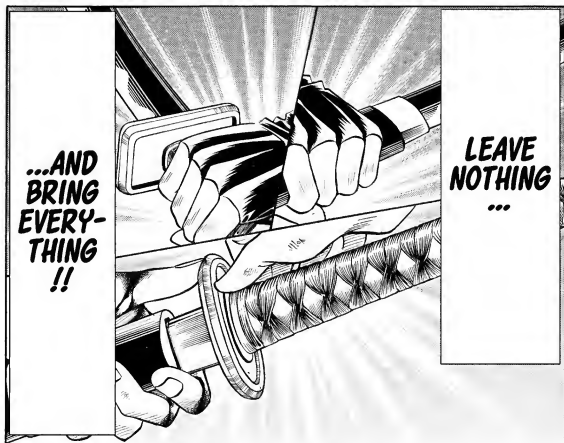


YES.
THEY'RE
HIS
EYES...

THAT IS
SHINOMORI
AOSHI!!



THAT'S THE
MAN THE FOUR
FOLLOWED,
OKINA-DONO
RESPECTED, AND
MISAO-DONO
ADMIRER.



“FREE TALK”

Long time no see, Watsuki here. For this time's usual nonsense, let's cut straight to the games, huh? "TenSamu," another of the "SamuSnip" games, has me totally hooked. I'm in love with "Rasetu"-mode Kazuki! When I first saw the character, I was thinking, "Another ninja?! What is this, 'Shinobi Spirits'...?!" But then I actually played it, and oh! was it fun. Those of you who've played the game probably know, but this Kazuki hasn't got much in the way of standard moves, and with his special techniques kind of risky to use, he's best reserved for more advanced players...meaning, of course, that Watsuki can't use him to his full potential, but still he loves the character anyway. Naturally, I use Genjūrō as much as always, even with his mid-slash so slow to release, and his vulnerability during "Cherry Blossom Slash" so increased, making for a much harder time for Watsuki in general. Aside from these two, I've also taken on Nakornru, Rinnruru, Tamu-Tamu, and Ukyō, all of whom should keep me entertained until No. 5 in the series comes out. I like the looks of No. 5 already; from the flow of things, a "ShinSamu" follow-up would seem logical, meaning that Nakornru will probably be brought back...and if that should happen, this time I'll be wanting the ending to be happy. (Please, SNK-sama!)

Another game that's got me hooked is "Den'nō Senki Virtual On." If you're from the "Gundam" era, this game should prove irresistible. Watsuki is partial to piloting the "Temujin," but is so feeble that its beam saber (I'm more a "slashing" kind of guy) doesn't see much action. Even so, I can now get to the last boss, Ziggurat, but...how the #@% do I beat him?! Somebody tell me, puriisu...!

...Well. For the usual nonsense, that was even more nonsensical than usual. Serious only from here on in; promise. The Kyoto Arc of "Ruroni Kenshin" is coming to an end [in the original Japanese serialization]. Designed to carefully balance both drama and fight scenes from the start, for the Kyoto Arc, "RuroKen" has been deliberately skewed toward battle. As a result, young male readers have been happy, and young female readers disappointed...which was pretty much expected. One particularly critical reader really got on my case. (At the time, I laughed—if only to get through the moment—but, later, I found myself depressed.) Why did it happen...? The reasons are more than a few, and I can't cover them all, so I won't even try. One, though, is to challenge myself as a writer: Just how much potential can I draw from fight scenes...? (Which, to be brutally frank, are the lifeblood of "Jnmp.") I enjoy deconstructing the battles of other artists, but how many had I done myself...? I decided I should just dive in, saving the self-criticism for later. But fight-scene fans are especially critical, and I've realized that that kind of manga really is hard to do well. A good battle is so much more than "just" a collection of fight scenes; as a story, it can be very worthwhile. When the Kyoto Arc is finished, the idea is to rebalance the drama and the fight scenes once more. We'll be heading into some pretty grim territory, but I'll try my best to make it fun where I can, so please continue lending your support to Kenshin and the gang's latest adventures.

See you next volume!



The Secret

(Part 1)



WELL,
THEY
ARE
PRETTY
EQUAL.

WHICH
OF THOSE
TWO...

...DO YOU
THINK WILL
WIN?

CHIE

IT WOULD
BE KILLING
TWO BIRDS
WITH ONE
STONE.

A DRAW WOULD
BE BEST—SO
LONG AS THEY
BOTH DIE.

I WANT
SOME CLOSURE
FOR SHINGETSU
VILLAGE AND
RENGOKU.

ME,
I WANT
HIMURA-SAN
TO WIN.



WELL,
LET'S
SEE...

BUT,
SHOULD
SHINOMORI-
SAN WIN...

...WHAT
TO DO
THEN,
SHISHIO-
SAN?



Act 120

**The
Secret
(Part I)**

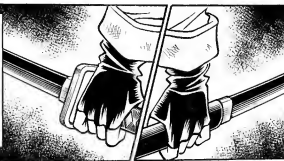
IF THAT
HAPPENS,
I'LL DEFEAT
SHINOMORI
AOSHI...

...AND
THEN I'LL
BE THE
STRONGEST.





NO DOUBT
HE'LL
UNLEASH HIS
KAITEN-
KENBU
ROKUREN...



AOSHI'S DOING
A REVERSE
DUAL-KODACHI.
NO MISTAKE
THERE.

FOR KENSHIN—
WHO'S ALREADY
WOUNDED—
ONE MOMENT
OF DELAY,
ONE MISREAD
INSTANT—AND
HE'S DEAD.

EITHER
LEFT, OR
RIGHT...



...LAUNCHING
SIX SUPER-
FAST STRIKES
ONE AFTER
ANOTHER,
FROM EITHER
LEFT OR RIGHT.

SINCE HE'S GOING
ALL-OUT, HE'LL
PROBABLY CALL UP
THE "SECRET"
MOVE, TOO...

KENSHIN'S
TAKING HIS
BATTOJUTSU
STANCE...

...HE'S
NEVER
SEEN
BEFORE.

NOT EVEN AOSHI
CAN FIGHT BACK
AGAINST
SOMETHING...

NEITHER
CAN STRIKE
FIRST.

A
PERFECT
STANDOFF.

I'M
SORRY...



IN THE END, IT'S
JUST AS THE
BATTOSAI SAID...
MY SPIRIT DIED,
AND I'VE BEEN
TRYING TO BLAME
MY OWN WEAK-
NESS ON YOU.

BESHIMI,
HYOTTOKO,
SHIKIJO,
HAN'NYA.

WIN OR
LOSE, IT
ALL
ENDS
HERE.

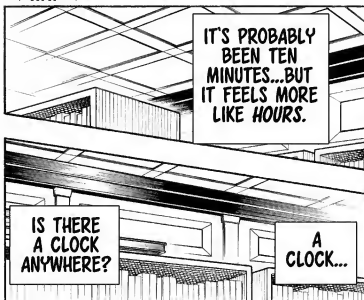
BUT
THAT
ENDS
NOW.



NO
"LOSE"—
I'M
GOING
TO WIN!

NO!





**THIS
BATTLE'S
BEING SPIED
ON FOR
SHISHIO!**

**KENSHIN,
WATCH
OUT!!**

**DON'T
SHOW YOUR
SECRET
MOVE!**





**FIRST
STRIKE
!!!**

ON THE SIDE
OPPOSITE THE
DRAWN-SWORD'S
ORIGIN, THE
STRIKE!

THE RIGHT
SIDE OF
THE NECK!!

...FROM
THE
LEFT!!

THE
ATTACK
STARTS...

!!六連!!
ろく
れん

...ROKUREN!!!!

剣舞回天
けん
ぶ
かい
てん

KAITEN-KENBU...



IN THE
MIDST
OF FINAL
BATTLE...

...THE PAPER'S
THICKNESS
BETWEEN LIFE
AND DEATH MUST
BE DETERMINED,
AND THE SECRET
MOVE RELEASED.

**HITEN
MITSURUGI-
RYŪ
FINAL
TECHNIQUE
!!**



THE
WILL TO
SURVIVE.

IN
ORDER
FOR YOU
TO OVER-
COME
THIS, YOU
NEED
THAT OF
WHICH
YOU
JUST
SPOKE...



AND
THAT'S
WHY—

IT'S NOT
JUST
MEGUMI
AND ME.
WE ALL
WISH FOR
YOUR
SAFETY.



...IT'S ALL
UP TO
"HEART."

THAT'S
WHY...



...LEFT
TO
FEAR
!!!!

THERE IS
NOTHING...

龍

...RYŪ NO
HIRAMEKI

AMAKAKERU...

天

ひり
らゆ
めう
きの

あま
がける

閃

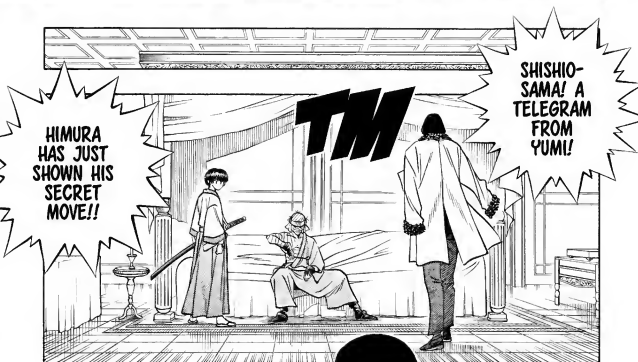
翔



HITEN
MITSURUGI-RYŪ
SECRET MO...

THIS...
IS THE...!





...MAKING
IT A
"GOD-SPEED
BATTOJUTSU."
IT LANDED
FIRST—EVEN
THOUGH IT
WAS
RELEASED
AFTER
AOSHI'S
STRIKE...



"...COULDN'T
SEE IT."

AHA
HA HA!



SHE'S
WRONG.

STUPID
WENCH!!

I HATE
WOMEN! I
HATE THEM!

THERE *MUST* BE
A CHARACTERISTIC
UNIQUE TO THE
SECRET MOVE...



BUT THAT
CAN'T BE
ALL OF IT.

TPP



KEEEN





GLOSSARY of the RESTORATION

A brief guide to select Japanese terms used in *Rurouni Kenshin*. Note that, both here and within the story itself, all names are Japanese style—i.e., last or “family” name first, with personal or “given” name following. This is both because *Kenshin* is a “period” story, as well as to decrease confusion—if we were to take the example of *Kenshin*’s sakabatō and “reverse” the format of the historically established assassin-name “Hitokiri Battōsai,” for example, it would make little sense to then call him “Battōsai Himura.”

Himura Kenshin

Kenshin’s “real” name, revealed to Kaoru only at her urging

Hiten Mitsurugi-ryū

Kenshin’s sword technique, used more for defense than offense. An “ancient style that pits one against many,” it requires exceptional speed and agility to master.

hitokiri

An assassin. Famous swordsmen of the period were sometimes thus known to adopt “professional” names—*Kawakami Gensai*, for example, was also known as “Hitokiri Gensai.”

Ishin Shishi

Loyalist or pro-Imperialist *patriots* who fought to restore the Emperor to his ancient seat of power

Juppongatana

Written with the characters for “ten” and “swords,” Shishio’s Juppongatana are literally that—the ten generals or “swords” he plans to use in his overthrow of Japan

kanji

Japanese system of writing, based on Chinese characters

katana

Traditional Japanese longsword (curved, single-edge, worn cutting-edge up) of the samurai. Used primarily for slashing; can be wielded either one- or two-handed.

Kawakami Gensai

Real-life, historical inspiration for the character of *Himura Kenshin*

kenjutsu

The art of fencing; sword-arts; *kendō*

kodachi

Medium-length sword, shorter than the *katana* but longer than the *wakizashi*. Its easy maneuverability also makes for higher defensive capability.

Bakumatsu

Final, chaotic days of the Tokugawa regime

-chan

Honorific. Can be used either as a diminutive (e.g., with a small child—“Little Hanako or Kentarō”), or with those who are grown, to indicate affection (“My dear...”).

“daruma doll”

A good luck/protection symbol, roly-poly “Daruma” figures (Usui calls it a “doll”) are traditionally given in Japan to those starting new ventures (a birthday, the beginning of a new year, a new work project). Because it starts with both eyes “blank”—the giver inks in one eye only, with the second eye to be completed by the receiver once the wished-for goal has been achieved—it often is used as a metaphor for sight...or the lack thereof.

dojo

Martial-arts training hall

-dono

Honorific. Even more respectful than *-san*; the effect in modern-day Japanese conversation would be along the lines of “Milord So-and-So.” As used by Kenshin, it indicates both respect and humility.

Edo

Capital city of the *Tokugawa Bakufu*; renamed *Tokyo* (“Eastern Capital”) after the Meiji Restoration

Gatotsu

A seemingly simple move or *waza*, the *Gatotsu* of Saitō Hajime is in actuality devastatingly powerful, due both to its variety and its malleability. Should the first, seemingly simple thrust fail, for example, it easily can be modified to a sideways thrust without loss of tactical advantage. There are four different “types” of *Gatotsu*: *Isshiki*, *Nishiki*, and *Sanshiki* (Variants One, Two, and Three), as well as *Gatotsu Zeroshiki*—the final or “succession” technique which doubles or even triples the power of the original thrust.

-san

Honorific. Carries the meaning of "Mr.," "Ms.," "Miss," etc., but used more extensively in Japanese than its English equivalent (note that even an enemy may be addressed as *"-san"*).

Shingan

Written with the characters *shin-* ("mind," "heart," "soul") and *-gan* ("eye," "insight"), "Shingan" may alternately be translated as "Soul Vision," or "Mind's Eye."

Shinsengumi

Elite, notorious, government-sanctioned and exceptionally skilled swordsman-supporters of the military government (*Bakufu*) which had ruled Japan for nearly 250 years, the Shinsengumi ("newly selected corps") were established in 1863 to suppress the *loyalists* and to restore law and order to the blood-soaked streets of *Kyoto*.

shōgun

Feudal military ruler of Japan

shōgunate

See *Tokugawa Bakufu*

"Swift Death to Evil!"

Although there is some debate on who originated the term (some say it was the personal slogan of Saitō Hajime; others hold it to be a more general motto of the *Shinsengumi* itself), a more liberal translation of "*Aku • Soku • Zan*" might be "Evil Unto Evil"...where, in this case, the "evil" would be beheading, or death.

Tokugawa Bakufu

Military feudal government which dominated Japan from 1603 to 1867

Tokyo

The renaming of "*Edo*" to "*Tokyo*" is a marker of the start of the Meiji Restoration

wakizashi

Similar to the more familiar *katana*, but shorter (blade between 12 and 24 inches)

-kun

Honorific. Used in the modern day among male students, or those who grew up together, but another usage—the one you're more likely to find in *Rurouni Kenshin*—is the "superior-to-inferior" form, intended as a way to emphasize a difference in status or rank, as well as to indicate familiarity or affection.

"ku-shaped" shuriken

Shuriken are, of course, the famed "throwing stars" known to lovers of samurai and ninja drama everywhere. "Ku-shaped" shuriken, on the other hand, are simply shuriken shaped like the Japanese letter/syllable "*ku*"—in other words, the boomerang shape shown in this manga.

Kyoto

Home of the Emperor and imperial court from A.D. 794 until shortly after the *Meiji Restoration* in 1868

loyalists

Those who supported the return of the Emperor to power; *Ishin Shishi*

Meiji Restoration

1853-1868; culminated in the collapse of the *Tokugawa Bakufu* and the restoration of imperial rule. So called after Emperor Meiji, whose chosen name was written with the characters for "culture and enlightenment."

Okashira

Literally, "the head"; i.e., leader, boss

Oniwabanshū

Elite group of *onmitsu* or "spies" of the *Edo* period, also known as *ninja* or *shinobi*.

patriots

Another term for *Ishin Shishi*...and, when used by Sano, not a flattering one

rurouni

Wanderer, vagabond

sakabatō

Reversed-edge sword (the dull edge on the side the sharp should be, and vice versa); carried by Kenshin as a symbol of his resolution never to kill again

-sama

Honorific. The respectful equivalent of *-san*, *-sama* is used primarily in addressing persons of much higher rank than one's self...or, in a romantic sense, in addressing those upon whom one is crushing, wicked hard.

IN THE NEXT VOLUME...

As the long-delayed decisive battle between Kenshin and Shinomori Aoshi concludes, those left behind at Aoi-Ya wage their own, desperate battle against the "Ten Swords" or Juppongatana of madman Shishio Makoto. The might of one "sword" in particular seems monstrous...that is, until Kenshin's former Hiten Mitsurugi master, Hiko Seijūrō, takes the field. Will one warrior's respect for another succeed where all else has failed?



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